The following images were scanned from a letter written by John Adams to his wife, Abigail Adams, on July 3, 1776.

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It is too high and lifted up, for men, who delight in nothing so much as Retire, Solitude, Silence, and Affinity. In quiet Life, no one has a Right to command me for following my own Indisposition, in Retirements. Simplicity is myself; in public Life, many Men has a Right to me, and as he pleased, at least he thinks so.

Up to this day, the greatest Question was decided, which was most debated in America, and a greater perhaps never was or will be decided among Men. A Revolution was perfect without one effecting nothing. But let me add something more. Men ought to be free and independent States, and at least, they have and ought to have full Power to make war, compose Peace, establish Government, and do all the Act and Things, which other States may Rightfully do. For will be in a few days a Declaration setting forth the Cause, which have in part as to their mighty Revolution, and the Reasons which justify it, in the light of God and man. A Clay of Consideration will be taken up in a few days.

When I look back to the Year 1761, and recall the Argument concerning War of Agitation, in the Superior Court, which I was called to preside at as the Governor, and the Generation between Great Britain and America, and ran through the whole Period from that Time to this, and recalled the Spirit of political Laws, the Chain of Events and Effects, I am surprised at the Scheme, as well as Gentleness of this Revolution. Britain has been pulled with Tory, and America with Wisdom, at last this is my Judgment. Time must determine. It is the Will of Heaven, that the two Countries should be bounded forever. It may be the Will of Heaven that America shall suffer, or continue still more wretched and Vulturous yet some days full, if this is to be the Case, it will have their good Effect, at least: it will inspire us with more Virtue, which we have not, and want many Laws, Justice, and Truth, which hartens, and dishonors, and depopulates. The Tyranny of Aristocracy produces Depopulation in States as well as Individuals. And the new Governs must, or we are assuming, in every Day, will require a Punishment from our Nests, and an Augmentation of our Taxes or they will be no Blessings. The People will have undermined Power, and the People are striven by the poorest and Venerable, as well as the Great, but I must submit all my Power and Trust to the Counseling Powers, in which, unfeigned all the Faith may be, I firmly believe.